

Cooking Thin from page B1

minutes to cook each night. For fun she includes a "guy-o-meter" that gives recipes a male perspective, meaning she asks men whether or not they like the food.

"I'm not about fat-free and sugar-free, I'm not about food substitutes. I'm about the food you love to eat and how to clean it up. Barbecue ribs - you can have them and chocolate cake too."

"As far as I'm concerned diet is a four-letter word. This is about being healthier, eating right and having fun," she said.

Daelemans tells readers to purchase locally grown, organic and seasonal foods because they're fresher. Her cookbook also offers cooking shortcuts, and warm and fuzzy anecdotes such as:

"I'm sure you can hear my mother in your kitchen repeating that old saying, 'It should take at least as long to eat it as it does to cook it.' Thanks mom. Can you imagine if we lived by that? We'd all be skinny sticks late for work."

Surprisingly, Daelemans said she thinks most people don't know how to eat right.

"I think most people think things are all or nothing," she said. "Many people don't realize how much difference making a few adjustments and trimming back here and there can make."

That said, we're an instant gratification society and often have unrealistic goals when it comes to health, particularly weight loss.

There are no photos in the book, but the graphics, glossary, list of must-have kitchen staples, fun tales and tips will satisfy your appetite.

Healds from page B1

ery looks like, introduces you to the winemaker or allows a virtual walk through the vineyards.

In a recent issue of the *Wine Exchange Stock Report*, the writer explains why lovers of Australian Shiraz will not be able to purchase the highly sought after 1998 E&E Black Pepper Shiraz. One thousand cases of this wine, destined for the U.S., will never arrive because the shipment couldn't obtain label approval from the U.S. government. It seems that

an over zealous government agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms decided that the name "Black Pepper" was misleading since the wine contained no actual pepper, even though there were no objections in four previous vintages. It boggles the mind!

The Healds are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 18648.

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Asparagus from page B1

Asian chefs savor asparagus roots and make candy out of them to flavor main dishes. European, and many American, chefs hunt for hard-to-find white asparagus. White asparagus is grown from the same seed as jade colored asparagus, but the growing techniques are different. Mounding soil over a row of plants produces white asparagus. They stay white as they see no sun. When the tip peaks through the earth, harvesters use a long sharp knife to cut down beneath the soil into the stem of the spear. Most white asparagus is grown in Germany. Having traveled and eaten meals all over Germany, I can tell you those chefs are not giving up their precious white asparagus for export. When some does make it out of Europe expect to pay \$10-\$15 a pound for

these albino beauties!

Snow White, or green home-grown asparagus will soon be making an appearance at a store near you. Grilled, poached, baked, wrapped in phyllo or stir-fried, don't miss the call of spring asparagus.

Choosing and handling asparagus

It should always be solid green with consistent shading.

Look for the bud to be tight and closed, with a darker color stalk, but no strong odor.

The bottom of the stalk should be clean cut in appearance with no browning or signs of shrinkage. Hints of purple/pink hues at base of stem are fine but avoid stems with too much white. White asparagus should be solid white and may have some purple colored hues at bottom of stalks.

Treat asparagus as you would fresh flowers. Cut away an inch or so from the bottom and store in a vessel that allows the spears to stand upright in the refrigerator in about an inch-and-a-half to 2-inches of water. If your refrigerator does not permit that kind of upright storage, wrap the asparagus with a wet paper towel and cover loosely with plastic or in a plastic bag.

Chef Kelli L. Lewton is owner of 2 Unique Caterers and Event Planners in Bloomfield Hills and Aunt Olive's Good Food 2 Go in Birmingham. Lewton is a graduate of Schoolcraft College's Culinary Arts program.

Try asparagus in soup, as cracker topping

ASPARAGUS VICHYSOISE

2 medium leeks, cleaned and diced fine
2 tablespoons butter
1 large potato, peeled and diced
12 asparagus spears
3 cups chicken or veggie stock
Salt and pepper to taste
8 ounces heavy cream
1 tablespoon chopped mint

Cook leeks and butter in a medium-sized pot over medium-low heat until onion is soft but not brown. Add potatoes and continue cooking until they are soft, but not brown (you can add a few tablespoons of stock to prevent sticking if need be).

Meanwhile, snap off tough ends of asparagus and add spears to pot along with the broth. Bring broth and vegetables to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add the heavy cream and gently simmer an additional 15 minutes - do not boil. Remove pot from heat, and let cool slightly. In small batches, puree soup in a blender or food processor. Serve cold or hot. Garnish with chopped mint. Yield: 6-8 servings

Recipe compliments of Kelli Lewton



Accent on asparagus: Welcome spring with fresh asparagus. It's nutritional and simple to prepare.

ASPARAGUS, PEAR AND WALNUT SALAD

15-ounce can pear halves, drained and diced
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 pound asparagus, blanched and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (2 cups)
1/4 cup sliced scallions (1/4-inch slices)
1/2 cup walnut pieces, toasted
2 tablespoons honey-Dijon or other Dijon-style dressing
8 romaine lettuce leaves

In a large bowl, toss pears in lemon juice. Add asparagus, scallions and toasted walnuts. Toss dressing with pear mixture until all is thoroughly coated. Place two lettuce leaves on each of four plates and spoon asparagus-pear mixture on top. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 124 cal., 6 g fat, 0 mg chol., 200 mg sodium, 17 g carbs, 3 g dietary fiber, 2 g pro.

Recipe from Pacific Northwest Canned Pears

There's a place for lamb in a low-fat diet

Lamb is a certain sign of spring. Meat sellers say people buy fewer roasts and more cuts of lamb as the weather gets warmer.

A simply roasted leg of lamb is the quintessential spring dinner. But a stew flavored with aromatic herbs is also appealing this time of year.

Most cuts of lamb are lower in fat than other red meat. And lamb fat is mostly located on the outside of the cut, or between the muscles, where it is relatively easy to trim, especially from larger pieces.

With proper trimming, cooking and portion size (4 ounces of uncooked meat per serving), lamb can be a delicious part of a healthy, low-fat diet. Lamb also is a good source of zinc, iron and protein.

Usually, the darker the color of the meat, the older the lamb is. Good lamb has a pinkish red color and finely-grained texture. Its flavor is often delicate, even

sweet.

It may be the most natural commercially-raised meat, since lambs feed on their mother's milk and on grass. (Some American lamb is also fed grain.)

Lamb dishes of all kinds are prepared in Mediterranean countries. The following recipe recalls Mediterranean lamb preparations using the strongly-flavored seasonings that go so well with lamb. And a stew is a good way to make a little lamb go a long way.

This recipe calls for lamb shoulder, which is ideal for stews. If you can't find cubed lamb shoulder at the market, ask the butcher to cube shoulder chops for you. The bones make it a little harder to eat, but they will add flavor and body to the dish.

GREEK LAMB WITH ORZO

1 pound boneless lamb shoulder, cut in 2-inch

cubes
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
5 carrots, cut in 1-inch pieces
1/4 cup non-fat, reduced-sodium chicken broth
Juice of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 cup orzo pasta
1/2 cup raisins
1 1/2 teaspoon dried sage
1 teaspoon dried mint
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint, for garnish (optional)

Heat a large, non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add lamb and brown, stirring frequently. If necessary to avoid crowding, do in 2 batches. Set meat aside.

Add oil to pan and heat until hot. Sauté onion and carrots until onion softens, 4 to 5 minutes, stirring frequently to avoid

burning.

Return meat to pan. Add broth, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes.

Add 3 cups water. Simmer 30 minutes or until lamb is almost tender.

Add orzo, raisins, sage and mint. Simmer until lamb is tender and pasta is cooked, about 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Adjust seasonings to taste, garnish with mint and serve.

Makes 6 servings.

Tip: You can use the mint from a tea bag if it is an herbal tea and not a blend of mint and regular tea leaves or other ingredients.

Nutrition information: Per serving: 285 calories, 8 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 34 g carbohydrates, 20 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 495 mg sodium.

Recipes and information from The American Institute for Cancer Research.

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